



Transportation

Enables Expansion

Utah is expanding its transportation infrastructure in innovative ways. Along with an improved public transportation system, Utah commuters are fortunate.

Our world was once dictated by the environment. Through technological progress, humans gained ascendancy over the landscape. We are able to live in environments that we could previously not have, and expanded to places we couldn't before.

Early roads were the first element of transportation infrastructure. They progressed from trails and dirt, to gravel and eventually paved roads. There were numerous benefits to paved roads in the early history of the U.S. Paved roads eased the stress on vehicles and resulted in increased levels of sanitation as horse manure could more easily be cleaned. Rails were built across the country and that infrastructure facilitated the movement of goods and thus enabled economic expansion.

Through the 19th and 20th centuries local, state and the federal government invested in the development of roads. Eventually all states were connected by a complex interstate highway system. The system of roads enabled an even greater level of connectivity.

Currently we have the most developed transportation infrastructure in history and it is still expanding. Growth strategies for transportation take into account a number of factors including environmental impacts, population growth, public transportation and efficiency.

In 2006, over 116,000 automobiles drove on I-80 on an average day. At the time there was not the infrastructure to accommodate that amount of traffic (as anyone who made that dreaded drive can attest). As such the Utah Department of Transportation initiated the I-80 State Street-to-1300 East construction project. The construction is planned to be completed by late fall 2009 and has received national attention because of the advanced technologies used to speed up construction such as Accelerated Bridge Construction.

Public transportation is another aspect of transportation where Utah shines. With TRAX and the recent opening of the Frontrunner line a large number of commuters are utilizing public transportation.

Frontrunner is a new commuter rail that travels from Salt Lake City to Weber County. In June 2008 approximately 7,800 riders utilized Frontrunner on an average day. According to Brandon Bott of the Utah Transit Authority, Frontrunner ridership has exceeded projections. "We are very pleased that ridership has exceeded our expectations and happy that residents in Salt Lake, Davis and Weber counties are taking advantage of the fast and reliable transportation."

High levels of ridership on TRAX applies to all lines. On the University line there are approximately 15,300 weekday boardings during the school year, which is more than double the initial projections. The Sandy/Salt Lake line enjoys over 28,000 weekday boardings on average.

Commuters are encouraged to utilize public transportation to reduce personal costs as well as their environmental impact. The infrastructure is there should you choose to use it.

All the road construction will result in infrastructure to support Utah's rapidly growing population. Though it may be a bother sometimes, just think, we could still have dirt trails. How long would your commute be then? 🚗

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